



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee convened in a regular meeting on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 301 W. Second Street, Room #1101, Austin, Texas.

Subcommittee Members in Attendance: Mayor Pro Tem Cole (Chair)
Council Member Morrison
Council Member Riley

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Cole called the Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Mary Ingle, President of the Austin Neighborhood Council, stating they are having serious issues with CodeNEXT processes of what we consider as a rush timeline and we deserve a quality product. There are a lot of things being done by the end of the year mainly so that this current Council can vote on the alternative approaches. We are asking you to consider slowing down this process. We have looked at what the staff has complied and this is not complete. The NCCD's are not there and there is information that is in error.

Daniel Llamas on the Executive Committee of Austin Neighborhood Council, stated that his neighborhood plans are updated every year by amendments and adjusted to what is happening now. Everything that staff is stating his neighborhood currently has, they have photographs and language of what they are looking for. The Neighborhood plan should be listed on the timeline and any updated information added as well.

Joyce Basiano, First Vice President of Austin Neighborhoods Council, the timeline of which staff presented is a graphic representation of a seriously flawed process. The public input was gathered from a few hundred people from a two series of meetings. Of which George Adams told you one series was held in October, 2013 and the last series held January, 2014. At these sessions data was gathered in a highly questionable manner and anyone could attend these meetings and make comments anonymously. At this time we feel we are effectively being left out of the loop on some information. The

decision that Council will make in October will be the most important decision of the whole process because it guides the remaining three quarters of the remaining process and it is going to be based on inaccurate data. More time should be spent on the diagnosis and analysis of existing data of the neighborhood plans, current land development code, city's infrastructure and Imagine Austin vision. Also, on the flow chart that is no information of the new Council coming in for 2015 to be educated on this information.

Laura Presley, President of Windsor Hill Neighborhood Association, spoke on the Alternative approaches within the timeline is the most crucial point. It sets the stage for what the staff and consultants will be doing for the next two years. A new Council coming in, in January needs to be on board and they need to have buy-in. Why does neighborhoods that already have plans why do they need to re-do this process. It only opens them up to new information.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked Laura Presley what is your response to the staffs comment of not replacing the neighborhood plan but supplementing the plan?

Laura Presley, stated who is providing that supplemental information? Is it someone who lives there or wants to make money in that area of town?

Council Member Tovo, asked Laura Presley if she was concerned about the community character, discussion's reopening those neighborhood plans?

Laura Presley, stated yes, exactly and have those timelines pushed back so they can understand the interpretation.

Council Member Riley, asked for clarity on putting off the decision in October.

Mary Ingle, stated the one thing that stands out to her is where is the box to re-educate the new Council? Where is it on the flowchart? There is no timeline to get the new Council up to speed?

Council Member Morrison, stated if the current Council decides to go ahead and vote one alternative we could have would be to add a step in the process explicitly for the new Council to come up to speed and this will cost us money but it needs to be done.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked Council Member Morrison if she was suggesting a first reading on the alternatives?

Council Member Morrison, stated no. She is suggesting that the current Council go ahead and review it as the staff has suggested and add another box within the timeline for the new Council for their review/adjustments. This is just an idea to put out there, but will take a lot of sorting through.

David King, spoke on the alternative box which shows on the timeline has no arrows pointing to the public for input. Before it procedures on the public should have input. The quality of this project is to have a lot of public input and review of this process, these are important factors. The new code should respect and reflect the neighborhood plans, the character, consistent with neighborhood plan, safety, flooding, impact of affordability and property tax for infrastructure neighborhood upgrades.

Frank Harren, stated he has a slightly different take. It is far more sensible for the current Council to make the decision on which of the major alternatives we should pursue. You are the Council that set this entire thing into motion, lived with it, and guided the process for three years. It is not the reasonable thing to punt this to some new Council that will have a large learning curve. We need to come up with some processes and new ideas as to how we can grow in the best way possible. . Austin is changing and we better get used to it and we better start working together in finding that best solutions.

Council Member Morrison, asked Frank what is his intake about Imagine Austin that says both preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and let's densitify the corridors and activity centers? Why haven't we had that conversation yet?

Frank Harren, stated you can't keep everything the same. You can't add three quarters of a million people by planning areas and have the neighborhoods look exactly the same way they looked twenty years ago. We can change the neighborhoods in a smart sensible way.

George Adams, stated that Imagine Austin includes the priorities mentioned neighborhood character, growth, density and activity centers and corridors.

Mario Cantu, concur with a lot of the speakers and it is very important as to what is going on with the neighborhood plans. There should be a box where the neighborhood contact teams can sit down with the consultants or the staff to provide information as to what they need to know. There are a lot of signs and symptoms that need to be discussed.

Joan Owens, Southwood Neighborhood Association, thanked everyone for all of their hard work. CodeNEXT should have a strong educational component for people like her who are now trying to get up to speed.

Council Member Morrison, asked if Joan had been attending the CodeNEXT meetings during outreach for the public?

Joan Owens, stated she attended the meeting at Crockett High School.

Mandy DeMayo, Stephen Delgado, Stephen Oliver and Dave Sullivan, Code Advisory Group (CAG), stated they were happy to be here today. Mandy has concerns about slowing down the process, it is such a long complicated endeavor with so many opportunities for public input and policy maker guidance, I have a great concern of slowing down the process. The goal is to update the Land Development Code of which has been discussed for years and years. This has been a well thought out process. As George Adams stated we have been successful in reaching out to all of the zip codes, reaching out to a more diverse group, lower income and renters through different outreach mechanisms. Stephen Delgado, stated we understand the concerns and the timelines are very important. We understand that this timeline was going to consist of multiple processes and multiple Council making decisions. The public input has been there and will continue to be there to bring things to the table.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked about having another box to deal with the alternatives for the new Council?

Dave Sullivan, stated the order of the Land Development Code, of the Code diagnosis first and the public listening second and we changed that order. We did comply with what a lot of citizens asked us to do by listening to the citizen's first then go into the diagnosis. It is really frustrating to me today, that people are still unsatisfied that we made that change. Council Member Morrison brought up some brilliant ideas today and what I would like to propose that we bring that up to our advisory group to vote on it as a possible recommendation to add another step to be brought up in 2015.

Council Member Morrison, stated it would be great to get some input from others on that and get examples of documents from other cities, get feedback from the public, CAG and what staff thinks of the idea and how much it will potentially cost us.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, thought it was interesting of the comments made about accountability and an issue on the campaign trail.

Council Member Morrison, stated that it would be helpful from staff to know of any kind of scheduling that the consultants and staff could do.

George Adams, stated staff will talk with the consultant team and get their thoughts on it.

Stephen Oliver, stated having various thoughts this afternoon as long as we can keep things on track it is within our best interest.

Council Member Morrison, asked staff and the CAG team about the mapping of new zones going into 2017 is that part of the consultants contract?

George Adams, stated we do not have that phase of the contract negotiated yet. There will be some involvement with the consultants, but do not know how that will look as of yet.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 7, 2014 – Approved the March 3, 2014, minutes on a 3-0 vote.

3. UPDATE ON CODENEXT, THE CITY'S INITIATIVE TO REVISE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE.

Mr. George Adams, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Review and Mr. George Zapalac, Project Manager for CodeNEXT.

Mr. Adams stated over the past 8 to 10 months they have been working very hard on CodeNEXT and stated today's presentation will provide an overview of why revise the code, process and schedule, listening and understanding and upcoming work products. The reason the code is being revised is because the last comprehensive revision was in 1984, amended hundreds of times, complexity of Code convolutes the permitting and approval process for all parties, Austin area growing by 110 people a day, the Code is a key tool for implementing Imagine Austin and it's not just about a better Code but a better City.

In October and November of 2012 a four step process was presented to the CPT committee and to the full Council in November of 2012 of the Code Revision process. Step 1 was the Listening & Understanding phase which began in July 2013, currently wrapping up this phase, but will continue to review/receive public input and listening throughout the process of all of the products produced. Step 2 Code Diagnosis, alternative approaches and outline which is an analysis of our existing Code of what is working or what need changing. Step 3 is the preliminary draft Code, November 2014 – October 2015 and Step 4 the Code adoption phase, November 2015 – 2016. So far there has been direct contact with over 150 community organizations, conducted interviews with over 100 stakeholders, held 4 listening sessions and 3 community character workshops and presented to over 40 community groups.

Staff has worked with numerous media outlets added to their calendar listings and receiving news coverage, also, social/digital media with CodeNEXT website, active on Facebook, Twitter and the City of Austin SpeakUpAustin site. Through all of these outreach efforts have reached hundreds of Austenite's and receiving thousands of comments.

Mr. George Zapalac, discussed with listening to the communities' one of the major comments they have heard repeatedly is the protection of existing neighborhood characteristics and they are reviewing the neighborhood plans so they can try and capture those goals and themes. Also, capturing the land uses for those plans. When reviewing these themes staff noticed some that were the same and some differences for the neighborhoods and tried to identify pattern so they may make some suggestions in the future. Staff is trying to understand approaches that could be used across multiple neighborhood areas, help develop a code that is appropriate for different types of places and plans will also be used to craft regulations and map zones in 2015-2016.

The Community Character Analysis will supplement adopted Neighborhood Plans, which cover less than half of city limits, help the consultant team understand Austin's diverse neighborhoods, understand distinct qualities of individual neighborhoods and understand common qualities among neighborhoods. To help with this effort staff has come up with a tool call Community Character in a Box. The Consultant team has documented 15 areas within the city representing a diversity of age and building types. Staff would like to document every area within the City so they are asking communities to assist staff with this photo documentation and asset mapping. Currently, staff has put together a tool to help the communities which will consist of maps, pens, makers and instructions so that any group that is interested can take this kit and help document their own neighborhood. So far over 150 groups have asked to participate and the goal is to document the entire city. This process will continue through the end of 2014.

Some of the upcoming work products are 1). Listening to the Community Report: Spring 2014; 2). Community Character Manual (1st Draft): Spring 2014; 3). Code Diagnosis: Summer 2014; 4). Code Approach Alternatives: Fall 2014; 5). Annotated Outline: Fall 2014 and 6). Drafting of the Code: 2015/2016.

The Summary of the Process and Schedule is Community Character Analysis extends to end of 2014; schedule has been adjusted to provide more review time.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, asked if those adjustments were included in the scheduled.

Mr. Zapalac, stated yes those adjustments are included in the current schedule.

Mr. Zapalac stated there are many opportunities for the public, board and commission and Council to provide input at each step. The Code writing doesn't begin until after Council selects its approach. Then once Council selects the approach it will not be complete until about two years. So there are

still many opportunities along the way as each draft product is produced for public review and commits. There have been many concerns that staffs have heard from neighborhoods asking if the neighborhood plans are being replaced; no we are only supplementing the plans. The single-family zoning districts are not going away, inadequate opportunities are being provided for public input, we open to the neighborhood's responses and will continue to receive those until the end of 2014 and staff should slow down the process. At this point one of the biggest concerns is that the whole process could be delayed until the new Council is up to speed, even though they will have ample opportunity to review. The goal is to get a document to Council later this year for them to review and act upon.

Council Member Morrison, asked staff to explain a little more as to what would be in the scheduled document?

Mr. Zapalac, stated that once Council see the diagnoses document which will be presented to Council in the next couple of months, that will identify specific problems identified within the code. Mr. Adams added that the advisory group has observed the base zoning districts don't do the job in terms of reflecting the different areas in Austin and the priorities of the communities.

Council Member Morrison, asked if there were any examples of what consultants have done before?

Mr. Adams, stated yes and staff could provide those.

Mayor Pro Tem Cole, stated the critical decision point alternative that Council will select is currently scheduled for October, 2015?

Mr. Adams, stated yes.

Council Member Riley, asked about the Upcoming Work Products timeline. The presentation presents dates of being busy for the year of 2014 but the drafting of the Code will be for 2015/2016. The two year process will have public forms, process review and an opportunity to make adjustments?

Mr. Adams, stated yes there will be an opportunity for review of all major products and steps.

Council Member Riley, asked about the last process before the new code goes into effect in 2017 of mapping of new zones. We are actually 2 Council staff's away from when that decision will be made.

Mr. Adams, stated that is correct.

Council Member Tovo, asked about the alternative approaches that it's possible that a new Council could impact the process and make some different decisions and wondered if staff considered that?

Mr. Adams, stated the process is not set in stone at any point and there is a lot to be said. The concern with the current request is it's only delaying it to the beginning of the year of 2015, but there is going to be some time needed for the new Council to get familiar with a huge number of issues and CodeNEXT probably will not be at the top of that list.

4. UPDATE ON ACCESS TO SHOAL BEACH PARK AND ADJOINING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT BY MOTORIST TRAVELING EAST ON CESAR CHAVEZ STREET.

Postponed to April 7, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Cole adjourned the meeting with no objection at 3:53 p.m.